

# **GREAT RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

## **HUNTING CHAPTER of VISITOR SERVICES PLAN**

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#### **NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM MISSION STATEMENT**

*“To administer a national network of land and water for the conservation management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish and ,wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”*

#### **GREAT RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PURPOSE STATEMENT**

*The Great River National Wildlife Refuge was created in 1958 ". . .for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."*  
*[16 U.S.C. § 715d].*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
II.	CONFORMANCE WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITY .....	2
	Relationship to Other Plans and Documents	
III.	STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES .....	3
IV.	ASSESSMENT .....	4
V.	DESCRIPTION OF HUNTING PROGRAM .....	5
	Hunting Opportunities	
	Consultation and Coordination with the State of Missouri.	
	Methods of Control and Enforcement	
	Funding and Staffing Requirements	
VI.	MEASURES TAKEN TO AVOID CONFLICTS WITH OTHER MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES .....	10
	Biological Conflicts	
	Public Use Conflicts	
	Administrative Conflicts	
VII.	CONDUCT OF THE HUNT .....	10
	Hunting Regulations	
	Special Hunts	
	Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunt	
	Hunter Application and Registration	
	Hunter Selection	
	Announcing and Publicizing Hunts	
	Hunting Orientation and Safety	
	Entry and Access Procedures	
	Hunter Requirements	
VIII.	REFERENCES .....	15
	APPENDIX A. Unit Maps .....	16

## **I. Introduction**

This Hunting Chapter will be part of the future Visitor Services Plan for the Great River National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Hunting Chapter identifies how the Refuge will manage public hunting opportunities on Refuge managed or acquired lands as identified in the Refuge's 2004 Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) (USFWS 2004).

Stretching over 80 river miles along the Mississippi River, the Great River National Wildlife Refuge serves to provide "stepping stones" along a migration corridor for more than 200 species of migratory birds traveling the Mississippi Flyway. These and other floodplain-dependent fish and wildlife species benefit from the diversity of scrub-shrub, bottomland hardwood, backwater slough, wet meadow, moist soil managed wetland, and grassland habitats for breeding, feeding and/or resting purposes.

The abundance of wildlife present on the Refuge provides the visitor with an enriching experience whether they are simply observing the wonders of nature or participating in hunting or fishing activities.

### **History of Establishment:**

The Great River National Wildlife Refuge, formerly the Annada District of the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge, was established in 1958 when Secretary of the Interior, Fred A. Seaton signed a document giving official Refuge status to certain lands along the Mississippi River between Rock Island and Alton, Illinois. The document also stated that portions of the Refuge would be designated for public hunting, while other important waterfowl concentration points would continue to be maintained as sanctuaries for migratory birds and other wildlife. Shortly after, the Director published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the Federal Register to permit the hunting of game birds and mammals on certain lands of the Refuge.

The Long Island Division of the Great River National Wildlife Refuge was included in the original establishment of the Refuge in 1958. Additional lands to the Long Island Division were later added either through General Plan lands and/or fee title acquisition. Further additions to the Refuge included the Delair Division fee title purchases in 1965 and 1976; the Fox Island Division fee title purchases in 1989, 1996 and 1997; and the Farm Service Agency (formerly Farmer's Home Administration) fee title transfers completed between 1992 and 1994.

**Goals:** The Refuge strives to "restore function of refuge lands to conditions that existed prior to human disturbance" (Great River and Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuges HMP 2012). This can be as simple as allowing native vegetation to return on its own or as time intensive as managing water levels in restored wetlands to replicate the seasonal fluctuations within the floodplain of the Mississippi River. Cooperation with private, State and Federal land management agencies helps to accomplish the Refuge goals to improve and understand floodplain habitats.

Principal government partners include the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps), the Missouri Department of Natural Resources - State Parks Division (DNR-SP), United States

Geological Survey (USGS) and the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Non-government agencies the Refuge works closely with include Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Missouri River Bird Observatory, universities and the St. Louis Audubon Society.

Great River NWR staff is dedicated to providing the public opportunities to enjoy wildlife oriented activities on the Refuge. The Refuge is currently working in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the design, fabrication and installation of kiosks at the USACE Recreation Area boat ramps near Long Island Division. In addition to these visitor amenities, Refuge staff participate in workshops, special events and other outreach activities to increase public understanding of the Refuge and its diverse management activities.

## **II. Conformance with Statutory Authority**

The Refuge staff developed this Hunting Chapter to guide hunting activities on the Refuge in a manner that allows us to fulfill the purposes for which the Refuge was established as well as provide wildlife-dependent recreation.

Guidance for authorizing public uses on National Wildlife Refuges is provided in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Improvement Act) of 1997 (USFWS 1997). The Improvement Act states, “compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate general public use of the System...through which the American public can develop an appreciation for fish and wildlife.” The Improvement Act recognizes that wildlife-dependent recreational uses, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation, when determined to be compatible, are a legitimate and appropriate use of the Refuge System lands. The Improvement Act states that these specific six uses should receive priority consideration in Refuge planning and management. Other uses not listed as priority public uses may be allowed if they are determined to be appropriate and compatible with the purposes for which the Refuge was established.

According to the Improvement Act, when a wildlife-dependent recreational use is determined to be a compatible use and is not inconsistent with public safety, that activity should be facilitated. The term “compatible use” is defined as a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a Refuge unit that, in the sound professional judgment of the Director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the System or the purposes of the Refuge. The Service’s Final Compatibility Policy (USFWS 2000) pursuant to the Improvement Act delegates the responsibility of determining compatibility to the Refuge Manager with concurrence by the Regional Office Supervisor.

**Relationship to other Plans and Documents:** In response to the Improvement Act, the Refuge is required to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) which was completed and signed in July 2004. While the CCP provides overall management direction, more detailed “step-down” plans were to be developed to refine Refuge programs and operations.

This Hunting Plan is a step-down plan from the CCP and the future Visitor Services Plan. Writing the hunting plan prior to the Visitor Services Plan was required due to the need to address hunting as a viable management tool for the Refuge and priority public use that should continue. Hunting was determined to be a compatible use within the CCP process in which a compatibility determination on hunting uses was proposed and approved. These uses, which include big game, upland game, and migratory bird hunting, are presented in this Hunting Plan. A list and a detailed description of the hunting opportunities proposed for the Refuge are provided in this document.

Upon completion and adoption of the Hunting Plan, the Service will publish a Proposed Rule in the Federal Register that will update the hunting program on the Refuge. Following the comment period on the Proposed Rule, a determination will be made whether to implement or exclude Refuge hunting as outlined in this Hunting Plan. Subsequently, a Final Rule will be published outlining hunting on the Refuge. An internally developed annual Hunting Proposal will be used to document how this Hunting Plan guides the implementation of the Refuge's hunting programs.

### **III. Statement of Objectives**

To fulfill the purpose for which the Refuge was established the Service envisions that it will make significant contributions by:

- Establishing multiple units within a corridor of floodplain and forest, wetlands, and native prairie along the Mississippi River between river mile 359 near Alexandria, MO and river mile 278 near Louisiana, MO.
- Managing diverse and abundant native fish and wildlife populations that use healthy and productive native plant communities of the Mississippi River and its environs.
- Providing the public with the opportunity to revitalize their spirits through high quality wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation.
- Supporting a community-based effort where citizens, businesses, private conservation organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies combine their efforts to restore and protect the Mississippi River and its watershed for future generations.

A well-managed hunting program directly supports the Refuge's overall purpose and goals. Although the Refuge has had a management plan that included a hunting program since its establishment, this Hunting Plan will be modeled specifically for the Refuge providing a supportive step-down plan for the CCP.

The Refuge's hunting program objectives are as follows:

- Through revision of the Refuge Hunting Plan, examine opportunities to utilize hunting for deer on the Refuge to assist in maintaining deer densities that are suitable to sustain a viable population at levels that do not impede other management objectives.
- Expand accessible hunting opportunities to include deer hunting in designated areas on the Refuge.

- Enhance public understanding of Refuge hunting opportunities by increasing the quality of maps, signs and wording within brochures and on the Refuge Web site.
- Increase the visibility of Refuge law enforcement and hunter adherence to federal and state regulations to ensure safe, high quality, ethical hunting.

Strategies related to expanding opportunities for underserved hunter populations, enhancing public understanding of the hunting program, and ensuring high quality, ethical hunting has been successfully implemented. The Refuge continues to explore additional strategies in pursuit of its stated hunting program objective.

#### **IV. Assessment**

White-tailed deer, waterfowl, water birds, aquatic mammals, passerine, and mammalian predators are monitored on the Refuge and surrounding areas by the Service and conservation partners. Fish, amphibians, reptiles and insects also are monitored, but not as frequently.

Recent assessments of species hunted in the vicinity of the Refuge indicate that those species are not facing a general decline. For waterfowl, the annual assessments are based upon the distribution, abundance and flight corridors of migratory birds. The annual Waterfowl Population Status Report (USFWS 2010) includes the most current breeding population and production information available for waterfowl in North America and is a result of cooperative efforts by the Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, various state and provincial conservation agencies and private conservation organizations.

The American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) is a popular game bird throughout eastern North America. The management objective of the Service is to increase populations of woodcock to levels consistent with the demands of consumptive and non-consumptive users (USFWS 1990). The woodcock population in the Central Region returned to the 10-year average after a decline in 2008 (Cooper and Parker 2009).

The mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*) is one of the most abundant species in urban and rural areas of North America. The annual harvest is estimated to be between 5% and 10% of the population (Otis et al. 2008). According to the Breeding Bird Survey there was a significant increase in doves heard and seen in the Central Management Unit (which includes Missouri) and the Eastern Management Unit (including Illinois) over a 10-year time period (1999-2008).

Upland Game including gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*), fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), and bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*) are not specifically monitored by state agencies, however, based on harvest numbers, hunter daily bag for 2010 compared to 2000 was lower for squirrel and quail, and higher for pheasants in Missouri, while all three species showed a decrease in hunter daily bag in Illinois for the same period. Populations of these species fluctuate widely based on yearly habitat conditions, food availability, and weather.

Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) populations have continued to expand in Illinois and Missouri since the first successful reintroductions in the late 1950's and early 1960's, respectively. Turkey hunting is allowed in both states by permit only in the spring and fall

seasons. Hunters pursuing turkey on the Refuge are required to obtain an applicable permit from the state; the Refuge issues no special permit.

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are the most important big game mammal in the Midwest. Deer hunting regulations in Missouri have changed a great deal since 1944, when 7,757 hunters harvested 519 bucks during a two-day buck-only season. Today there are approximately 500,000 deer hunters in Missouri harvesting up to 300,000 deer annually. Hunters harvested 275,702 deer in Missouri in 2010. The Conservation Department's deer management goal is to maintain a statewide deer population level that provides adequate opportunities for hunters and for people who enjoy watching deer, but low enough to minimize crop/landscape damage and deer-vehicle accidents (MDC). In 2010 deer densities continued to increase throughout much of the state.

In Illinois deer hunting regulations have changed a great deal since the first season in 1958. Today (according to the 2012-13 season) there are over 628,000 permits issued annually to deer hunters in Illinois resulting in the harvest ranging from 181,000 to 199,000 deer. The IDNR's deer management goal is to maintain a statewide deer population level that provides adequate opportunities for hunters and for people who enjoy watching deer, but low enough to minimize crop/landscape damage and deer-vehicle accidents. In 2012 deer densities remained stable throughout much of the state.

Population numbers of furbearers and small game including cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), badger (*Taxidea taxus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), red fox (*Vulpus vulpus*) and coyote (*Canis latrans*) are not specifically kept by state agencies, however, based on harvest numbers the hunter daily bag for 2010 compared to 2000 was lower for rabbit, bobcat, raccoon, and coyote, and higher for opossum, red fox and gray fox in Missouri, while in Illinois the hunter daily bag for the same period showed lower numbers for raccoon, red fox and coyote, and higher numbers for rabbit, gray fox and opossum. There were no comparison information for badger and striped skunk in Illinois and bobcat are illegal to harvest in the state. Populations of these species fluctuate widely based on yearly habitat conditions, food availability, and weather.

Other game, such as the American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), green frog (*Rana clamitans*), and groundhog (*Marmota monax*) are not specifically monitored by state agencies, however, based on harvest numbers the hunter daily bag for 2010 compared to 2000 in Missouri was lower for groundhog and American crow. Illinois had lower numbers for groundhogs and higher numbers for crow during the same time period. Populations of these species fluctuate widely based on yearly habitat conditions, food availability, and weather.

Suitable habitat exists on the Refuge lands to support hunting as proposed. The viability of the game species populations proposed to be hunted is not expected to be negatively affected by hunting according to State season guidelines. In fact, some hunted species populations (e.g., white-tailed deer, resident Canada goose) have risen substantially and are considered locally overabundant.



## **V. Description of Hunting Program**

All units of the Refuge support huntable populations of migratory birds, big game and upland game. Not all divisions of the Refuge are open to the public for wildlife oriented recreational uses as defined in the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. Where allowed, most hunting on the Refuge follows the season dates and bag limits outlined in state regulations. On Service lands where further restrictions apply to state seasons, conflicts with the purposes for which the Refuge was established and/or purchase agreements of the Refuge are the key factor in those decisions. In all other cases where consistency with the state seasons is applicable, it serves to help reduce confusion when hunters participate in hunting activities on those Service lands.

### **Hunting Opportunities**

The hunting program generally allows specific hunting activities on designated units or portions of units. This enables the Refuge to balance species needs and other recreational uses with hunting activities.

Hunting management practices and procedures on Refuge units are as follows:

- The Refuge will open acquired lands to hunting consistent with Missouri and Illinois state hunting regulations and seasons on all game species, unless specific area conditions require more restrictive regulations for reasons of safety; quality of experience; or conflicts with Refuge purposes apply. The most likely causes of such a variation include size of the area, proximity to population centers, adjoining land use and similar factors.
- State seasons and limits apply for all Refuge specified species on designated areas of the Refuge.

Hunting opportunities discussed in the CCP indicate areas for hunting Migratory Game Birds, Upland Game and Big Game. Those game species are as follows:

- A. Migratory Game Birds: moorhen, coot, rails, woodcock, common snipe, mourning dove and waterfowl (i.e., geese and ducks).
- B. Upland Game: pheasant, rabbit, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, bobwhite quail, cottontail rabbit, badger, bobcat (in Missouri only), opossum, striped skunk, raccoon, gray fox, red fox and coyote.
- C. Big Game: turkey and white-tailed deer
- D. Other game: bullfrog, green frog, and groundhog.

Certain Refuge units and parts of units would be open only to restricted hunts. A restricted hunt is a hunt that is restricted to certain hunting methods and/or dates.

These restricted hunts will primarily be used to improve safety and ensure a high quality recreational experience for hunters and adjacent property owners and users. Additional restricted hunts may be used to better manage game species. Future Refuge land acquisition restricted hunts will not be determined under this Hunting Plan.

Hunting activities allowed on specific Refuge units:

**Fox Island Division**

- Migratory Birds
  - Closed to hunting migratory birds.
- Upland game
  - Refuge is closed to upland game hunting from October 16 through December 31.
  - Outside of the specified dates, upland game hunting is allowed in accordance with State seasons and regulations.
  - Refuge is only open from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed when using shotgun.
- Big Game (Deer and Turkey)
  - Open to hunting deer during the statewide archery deer and special state-managed hunts.
  - Open to turkey hunting during state spring season, including youth season, and the fall archery season only.
  - Only non-toxic shot is allowed for turkey hunting.

**Long Island Division**

- Migratory Birds
  - Waterfowl and coot hunting is allowed in accordance with state seasons and regulations.
  - Hunting only from blinds constructed on sites posted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed.
- Upland game
  - Open to upland game hunting is allowed in accordance with State seasons and regulations.
  - Refuge is only open from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed when using shotgun.
- Big Game (Deer and Turkey)
  - Open to deer hunting in accordance with State seasons and regulations.
  - Open to turkey hunting in accordance with state seasons and regulations
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed for turkey.

**Delair Division**

- Migratory Birds
  - Closed to hunting migratory birds.
- Upland game
  - Closed to hunting upland game.
- Big Game (Deer and Turkey)
  - Open only to special state-managed deer hunts with a Refuge permit.
  - Closed to turkey hunting.

## **FSA Lands**

### **Cherry Box Unit**

- Migratory Birds
  - Closed to hunting migratory birds.
- Upland Game
  - Open to upland game hunting with shotgun only in accordance with state seasons and regulations.
  - Refuge is only open from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed.
- Big Game (Deer and Turkey)
  - Open to archery deer hunting only in accordance with state seasons and regulations.
  - Open to turkey during the state spring season, including youth season, and the fall archery seasons only.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed for turkey.

### **Hickory Creek Unit**

- Migratory Birds
  - Closed to hunting migratory birds.
- Upland Game
  - Open to upland game hunting with shotgun only in accordance with state seasons and regulations.
  - Refuge is only open from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed.
- Big Game (Deer and Turkey)
  - Open to archery deer hunting only in accordance with state seasons and regulations.
  - Open to the state spring season, including youth season, and the fall archery seasons only.
  - Only non-toxic shot allowed for turkey.

### **Canton Unit**

- Closed to hunting.

A high priority for the Refuge is to provide compatible wildlife-dependent public uses such as hunting. Providing access for youth and persons with disabilities to Refuge programs and facilities is another high priority. Accommodating individuals with disabilities typically entails granting exemptions to Refuge regulations for the purpose of enabling those persons to engage in compatible activities on the Refuge. The most common type of exemption given will be authorizations of limited duration which allow the use of motorized vehicles on existing roads and trails.

### **Consultation and Coordination with the State**

Previous to this Hunting Plan, the Refuge's hunting program was developed in coordination with MDC and IDNR regional and area managers. This coordination was accomplished through

formal and informal meetings as well as the Refuge soliciting MDC and IDNR comments on written hunting plans and supporting documents.

The Refuge's consultation with MDC and IDNR regional and area managers for the development of this Hunting Plan dates back to a series of meetings to develop a vision for Refuge programs via the Comprehensive Conservation Plan process in 2004. Formal and informal consultation specific to the Refuge's hunting programs will continue.

The Refuge has moved forward with developing this Hunting Plan based upon earlier formal coordination with the MDC and IDNR as well as the intervening informal discussions.

Consultation and coordination with MDC, IDNR and others regarding its annual implementation will be a combination of formal and informal activities based upon the nature of the issues to be addressed.

### **Methods of Control and Enforcement**

The enforcement of Refuge and state hunting regulations, trespass and other public use violations normally associated with management of a National Wildlife Refuge is the responsibility of commissioned Federal Wildlife Officers. Federal Wildlife Officers cooperate with, and are assisted by state, county and city police officers as well as state conservation officers. The procedures used for obtaining law enforcement assistance are based on the legal jurisdiction where incidents occur. The Refuge regularly meets with the various state, city and county law enforcement agencies to develop agreements and strategies to ensure law enforcement operations are performed as safely and efficiently as possible.

Refuge Visitor Services staff manages the Refuge's outreach program and consequently routinely interact with and assist Refuge users during hunting seasons.

### **Funding and Staffing Requirements**

The annual costs of Refuge activities to attain the Hunting Program objective is an estimated \$70,000 out of an overall Refuge operating budget of about \$800,000. These costs include staff (150 days, \$40,000) and operating expenses (\$30,000) for Refuge law enforcement and hunter assistance during the hunting season. This estimate also includes Refuge staff activities associated with planning and preparing for (e.g., special signage and access) and monitoring hunting activities.

Additional expenses include boundary posting and other signage, maintenance of parking lots and gates, brochures, regulatory signs and other hunting specific activities. An increase in law enforcement patrols including vehicle costs and overtime might also be necessary. These additional costs, estimated at \$10,000, would be accrued if officers from other sources are needed to assist with the hunting program.

## **VI. Measures Taken to Avoid Conflicts with other Management Activities**

### **Biological Conflicts**

The Refuge avoids conflict related to biological resources by adopting the “wildlife first” principle explicitly stated in the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. Staff monitors species population trends to ensure that target species can be hunted on the Refuge without adverse effect on the species. These monitoring activities include direct observation of populations, consultation with State and Service species specialists, and review of current species survey information and research. In addition, the Refuge limits or excludes hunting activities on portions of Refuge Units.

### **Public Use Conflicts**

In an effort to avoid conflicts with non-hunting priority recreational uses, as outlined in the Improvement Act, and for safety reasons, the Refuge enforces a series of Refuge-specific hunting regulations.

At the Canton Unit the area is closed to all hunting and trapping activities due to the small size of the area (44 acres) and the proximity to the City of Canton, which lies immediately to the south of the unit. Concern for the safety of people in the area warranted this designation.

Deer hunting on the Cherry Box and Hickory Creek Units is restricted to archery equipment only. Upland game hunting is allowed by shotgun only. Public safety is the reason for the limitations as the areas are small in size and single projectile firearms have the potential to reach adjacent private property.

### **Administrative Conflicts**

Refuge management activities can be accomplished without conflict with hunting activities through the use of administratively closed areas, timing of hunts, and methods of hunt. The most potential for hunting to conflict with management activities occurs during shallow water habitat work which involves the operation and maintenance of pumps, as well as the installation and removal of stop-logs throughout the spring and fall migrations at the Fox Island Division. This activity requires the presence of Refuge personnel throughout the unit. Closing the immediate area to all public entry is a consideration. Requiring Refuge personnel to wear the appropriate hunting attire on their upper body and head improves the safety of the workers.

## **VII. Conduct of the Hunt**

### **Hunting Regulations**

All hunting activity is subject to Refuge-specific regulations (as noted below) in addition to State regulations. When Refuge-specific regulations and State regulations differ, the more restrictive regulation will apply.

### **Regulations pertaining to all National Wildlife Refuge System Lands**

Requirements for hunting on units of the National Wildlife Refuge System are found in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1, Subchapter C, Section 32.2. They state:

*The following provisions shall apply to each person while engaged in public hunting on areas of the National Wildlife Refuge System:*

- (a) Each person shall secure and possess the required State license.*
- (b) Each person 16 years of age and older shall secure and possess a Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp while hunting migratory waterfowl.*
- (c) Each person shall comply with the applicable provisions of Federal law and regulations including this subchapter and the current Federal Migratory Bird Regulations.*
- (d) Each person shall comply with the applicable provisions of the laws and regulations of the State wherein any area is located unless further restricted by Federal law or regulation.*
- (e) Each person shall comply with the terms and conditions authorizing access or use of wildlife refuges, including the terms and conditions under which hunting permits are issued.*
- (f) Each person must comply with the provisions of any refuge-specific regulations governing hunting on the wildlife refuge area. Regulations, special conditions, and maps of the hunting areas for a particular wildlife refuge are available at that area's headquarters. In addition, refuge-specific hunting regulations for migratory game bird, upland game, and big game hunting appear in §§32.20 through 32.72.*
- (g) The use of any drug on any arrow for bow hunting on national wildlife refuges is prohibited. Archers may not have arrows employing such drugs in their possession on any national wildlife refuge.*
- (h) The unauthorized distribution of bait and the hunting over bait is prohibited on wildlife refuge areas. (Baiting is authorized in accordance with State regulations on national wildlife refuges in Alaska).*
- (i) The use of nails, wire, screws or bolts to attach a stand to a tree, or hunting from a tree into which a metal object has been driven to support a hunter is prohibited on wildlife refuge areas.*
- (j) The use or possession of alcoholic beverages while hunting is prohibited.*
- (k) You may possess only approved nontoxic shot while in the field, which we identify in 50 CFR 20.21(j), while on Waterfowl Production Areas, or on certain other areas of the National Wildlife Refuge System as delineated on maps, leaflets and/or signs, available at each refuge headquarters or posted at each refuge, or as stated in refuge-specific regulations. Where we allow turkey and deer hunting, you may use slugs and shot containing lead to hunt these species unless prohibited by refuge-specific regulations and/or State law.*

The regulations, as they are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), are the official notification to the public. Copies of the CFR can be found in libraries and online.

### **Regulations Specific to Great River National Wildlife Refuge**

The hunting regulations specific to the Great River National Wildlife Refuge are found at 50 CFR 32.44, Missouri: **Great River National Wildlife Refuge.**

*A. Migratory Game Bird Hunting.*

*We allow hunting of waterfowl and coot on the Long Island Division of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following condition:*

- 1. We allow hunting blinds constructed only on sites posted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.*

*B. Upland Game Hunting.*

*We allow hunting of upland game species on Long Island, Fox Island, Cherry Box, and Hickory Creek Divisions of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:*

- 1. We open Long Island, Fox Island, Cherry Box, and Hickory Creek Divisions for upland game hunting only from ½ hour before legal sunrise until ½ hour after legal sunset.*
- 2. We close Fox Island Division to all upland game hunting from October 16 through December 31.*
- 3. Shotgun only allowed on the Cherry Box and Hickory Creek Divisions.*
- 4. You may possess only approved non-toxic shot when hunting with a shotgun (see § 32.2(k)).*

*C. Big Game Hunting.*

*We allow hunting of white-tailed deer and turkey on designated portions of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:*

- 1. We prohibit construction or use of permanent blinds, platforms, or ladders (see §27.92).*
- 2. We prohibit hunting over or placing on the refuge any salt or other mineral blocks (see §32.2 (h)).*
- 3. We only allow portable tree stands from September 1 through January 31 of each year. The hunter's full name, address, and state-generated hunter ID number must be permanently attached in a visible location on the stand. Limit one stand per hunter.*
- 4. We allow turkey hunting on the Fox Island, Cherry box, and Hickory Creek Divisions during the State spring seasons, including youth season, and the fall archery only season only. We are not open to fall firearm turkey hunting.*
- 5. Turkey hunters using shotgun must use and possess only approved non-toxic shot (see § 32.2(k)).*
- 6. On the Fox Island Division, we allow deer hunting only during the state archery season and special State-managed deer hunts.*
- 7. On the Cherry Box and Hickory Creek Division, only archery deer hunting is allowed during the statewide archery deer season.*
- 8. On the Delair Division, we allow deer hunting only during special State-managed deer hunts.*

*D. Sport Fishing.*

*We allow fishing on the Long Island and Fox Island Divisions of the refuge in accordance with State regulations subject to the following conditions:*

- 1. We prohibit the taking of turtle and frog (see §27.21 of this chapter).*
- 2. On the Fox Island Division, we allow bank fishing only along any portion of the Fox River from January 1 through October 15.*

State hunting regulations applicable to the Refuge, such as seasons, bag limits, and general methods of take are published annually in the state hunting and trapping regulations. In addition, a synopsis of Refuge-specific regulations is made available to the public in the Refuge's hunting

brochure. Copies of the hunting brochure are available at the Refuge's Visitor Center and on the Refuge internet website.

### **Managed Hunts**

The Delair Division of the Refuge is closed to the public with the exception of state-managed deer hunts. The Delair and Fox Island Division managed hunts are an activity to achieve deer management goals for the benefit of the resources and for the health of the population. All managed hunts require Refuge specific authorization and are conducted within the framework of the state seasons and regulations for the species proposed to be hunted.

### **Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunt**

Hunting enjoys broad support within the state of Missouri and most of Illinois. Potential user conflicts between hunting and non-hunting visitors are expected to be minimal as there is little overlap between the preferred times and places of use between hunters and other user groups. In certain areas safety concerns and potential conflicts have been addressed by restricting hunting opportunities to specific methods of take (archery only).

### **Hunter Application and Registration**

For general hunting activities, no special application or registration process is required.

For managed hunting activities, any hunter eligible under State law may apply for any Refuge hunt in which they are qualified. Depending on the specified hunt, applicants may be required to send applications directly to the Refuge, or the State Agency managing the specific hunt. As part of the Refuge application/registration procedure, any application sent directly to the Refuge must contain forms approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

### **Hunter Selection**

For general hunting activities, there is no special hunter selection process. Hunters who are eligible to hunt under Missouri and Illinois law are allowed to hunt on the Refuge.

For managed hunting activities, applications for qualified hunters are accepted either by the state, or the Refuge, during a specific, advertised application period. Once the application period has closed, all qualified applicants are entered into a random drawing for selection. Preference points may or may not be applied to unsuccessful applicants to increase odds of being drawn for future hunts.

### **Announcing and Publicizing Hunts**

All hunts are advertised through various forms of media including print, social, and internet.

### **Hunting Orientation and Safety**

The Refuge requires no specific orientation or safety training for hunters participating in general hunting activities. Both the State of Missouri and State of Illinois have established hunter education and safety training requirements that have been in effect for many years. Participants in managed hunts receive orientation and safety training as part of those programs.



Hunter orientation to Refuge lands and areas open to hunting are provided directly on the Refuge through the use of signs, brochures, flyers, maps and trail guides. Outlets off the Refuge that are a source of information include MDC and IDNR offices, and the internet.

### **Entry and Access Procedures**

There are no special entry or access procedures for hunters using the Refuge during general hunting activities. The public can enter the Refuge either through official trailheads and parking areas or from the Mississippi River. Hunters may also access Refuge lands through legal means from adjacent private, state, county and city lands.

Entry and access during managed hunts is restricted. Hunters are required to check-in and out each day.

### **Hunter Requirements**

The Refuge does not impose any special requirements on those wishing to hunt on the Refuge, except for hunters participating in managed hunts. Eligibility and other requirements for participating in managed hunts are described earlier in this document. Hunters who are eligible to hunt under Missouri and Illinois law are allowed to hunt on the Refuge.

The Refuge does not require hunters to report on hunting activities or harvest separately from the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) and state-mandated requirements during general hunting activities.

During managed hunts, the Refuge requires hunters to report their harvest. Service policies and procedures and Office of Management and Budget requirements are adhered to.

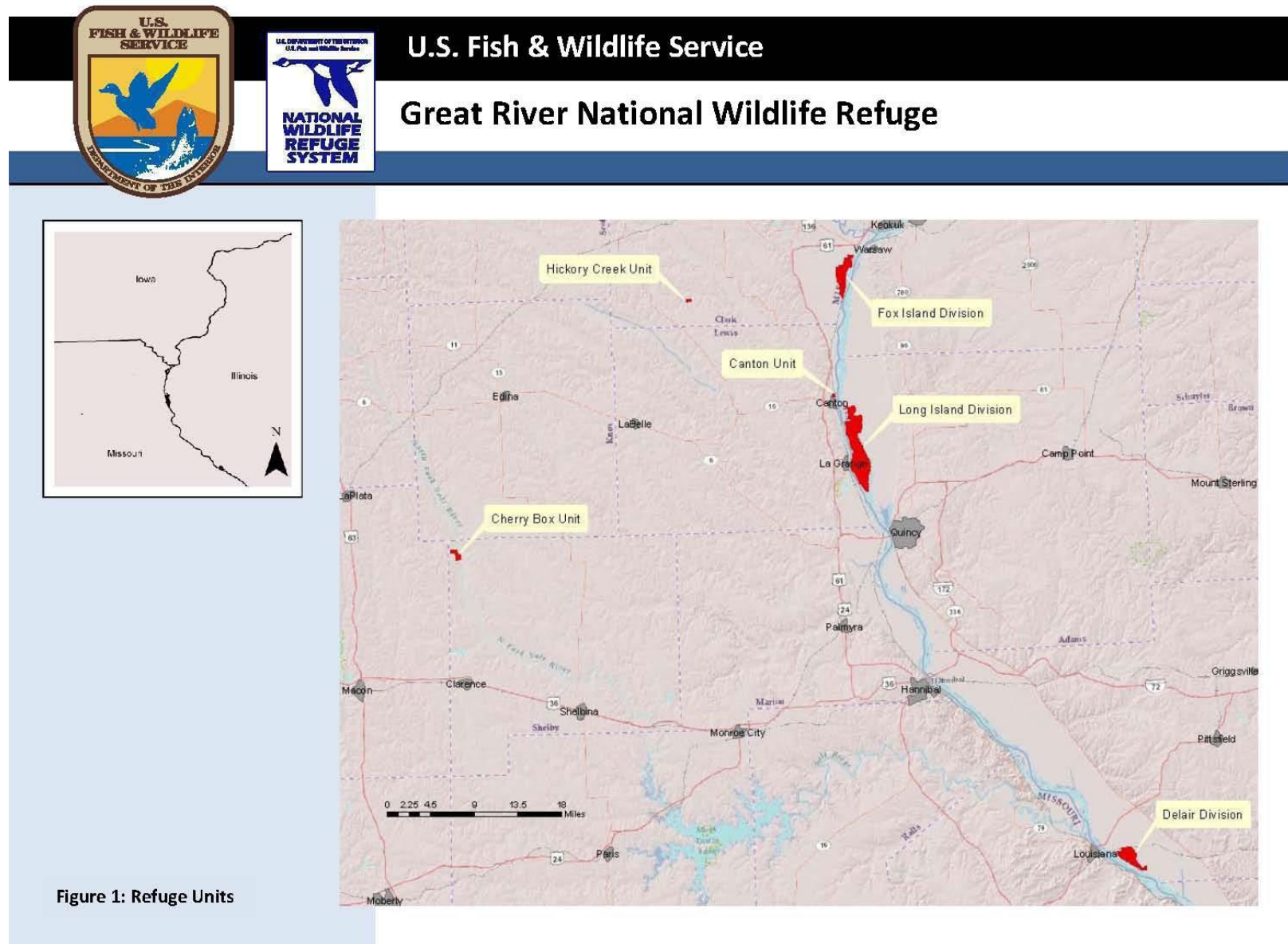
Bow and arrow, muzzleloaders and shotguns are allowed for hunting on designated areas of the Refuge. Possession of shot other than approved non-toxic shot while hunting is prohibited except that shotgun slugs and muzzleloader ammunition containing lead may be used when hunting deer. Hunting dogs may be used for hunting small game and migratory birds. Dog training not associated with an actual hunt is prohibited.

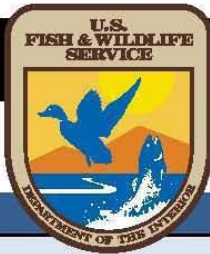
It is unlawful to hunt from a permanent stand on the Refuge. Attaching a stand or steps to a tree by use of screws, bolts, nails or other implements driven into the tree is prohibited. All personal property must be removed from the Refuge at the end of each day, unless specifically allowed. This includes boats, decoys and other hunting equipment.

## VIII. References

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## Appendix A – Unit Maps





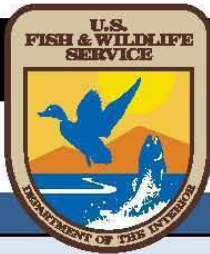
## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Great River National Wildlife Refuge



Figure 2: Fox Island Division  
2,100 Acres





## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Great River National Wildlife Refuge

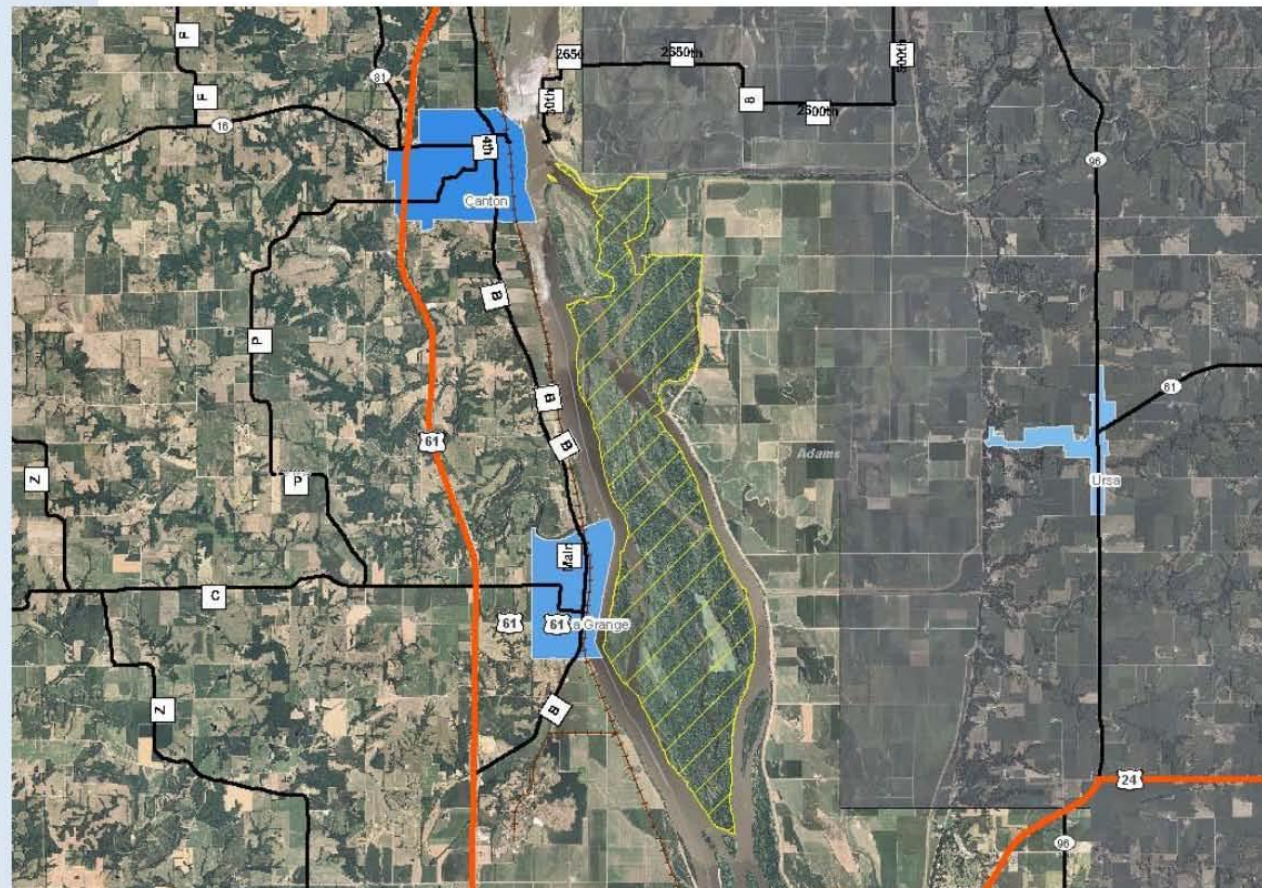
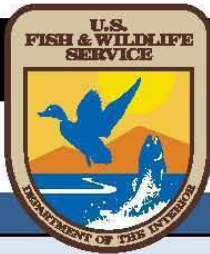


Figure 3: Long Island Division  
6,800 Acres





## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Great River National Wildlife Refuge

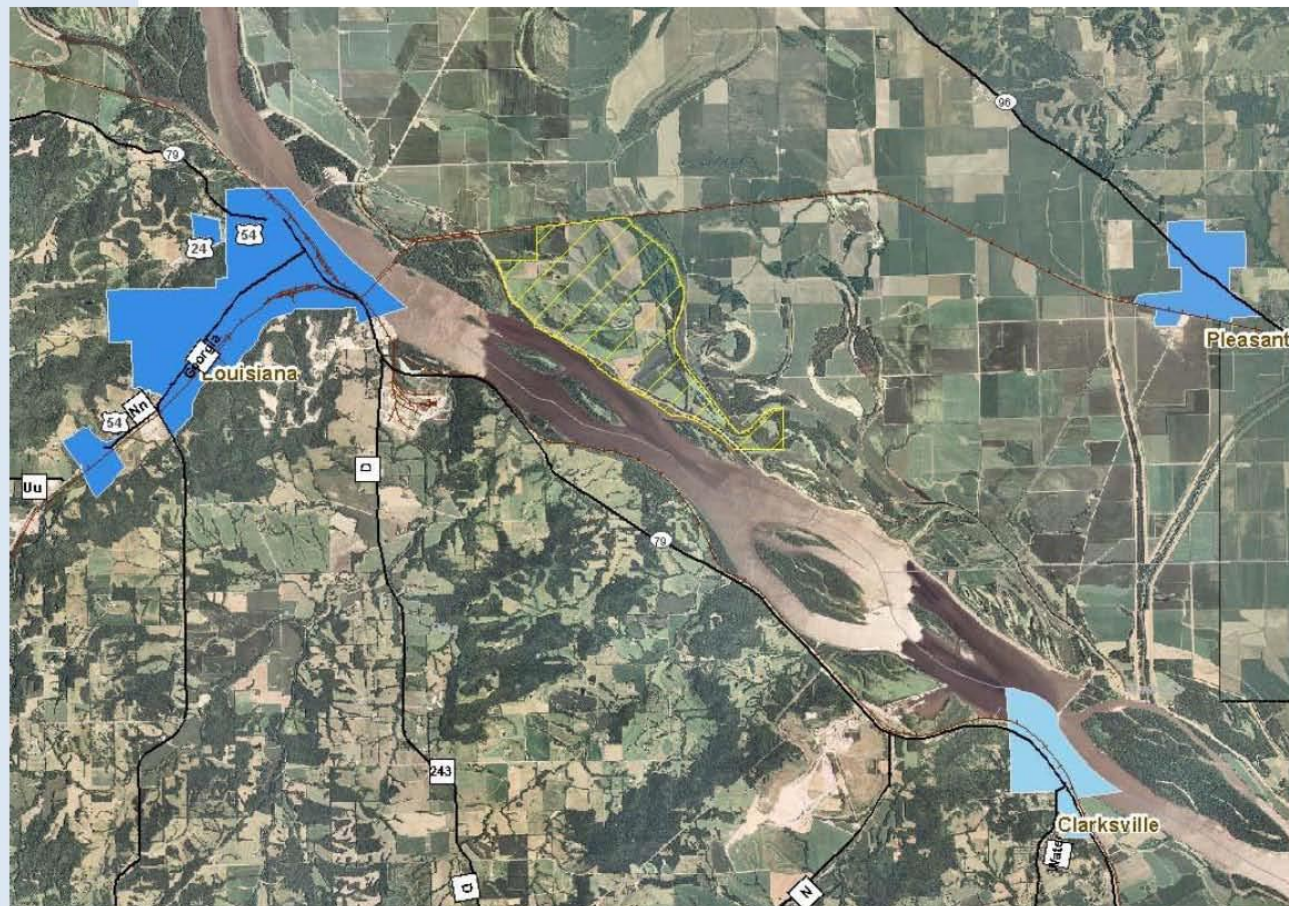
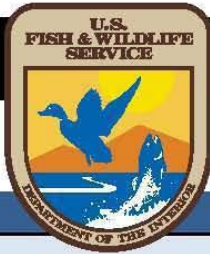


Figure 4: Delair Division  
1,737 Acres





## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Great River National Wildlife Refuge

#### Legend

- Refuge Property
- Highway
- Major Road
- Nearest Town

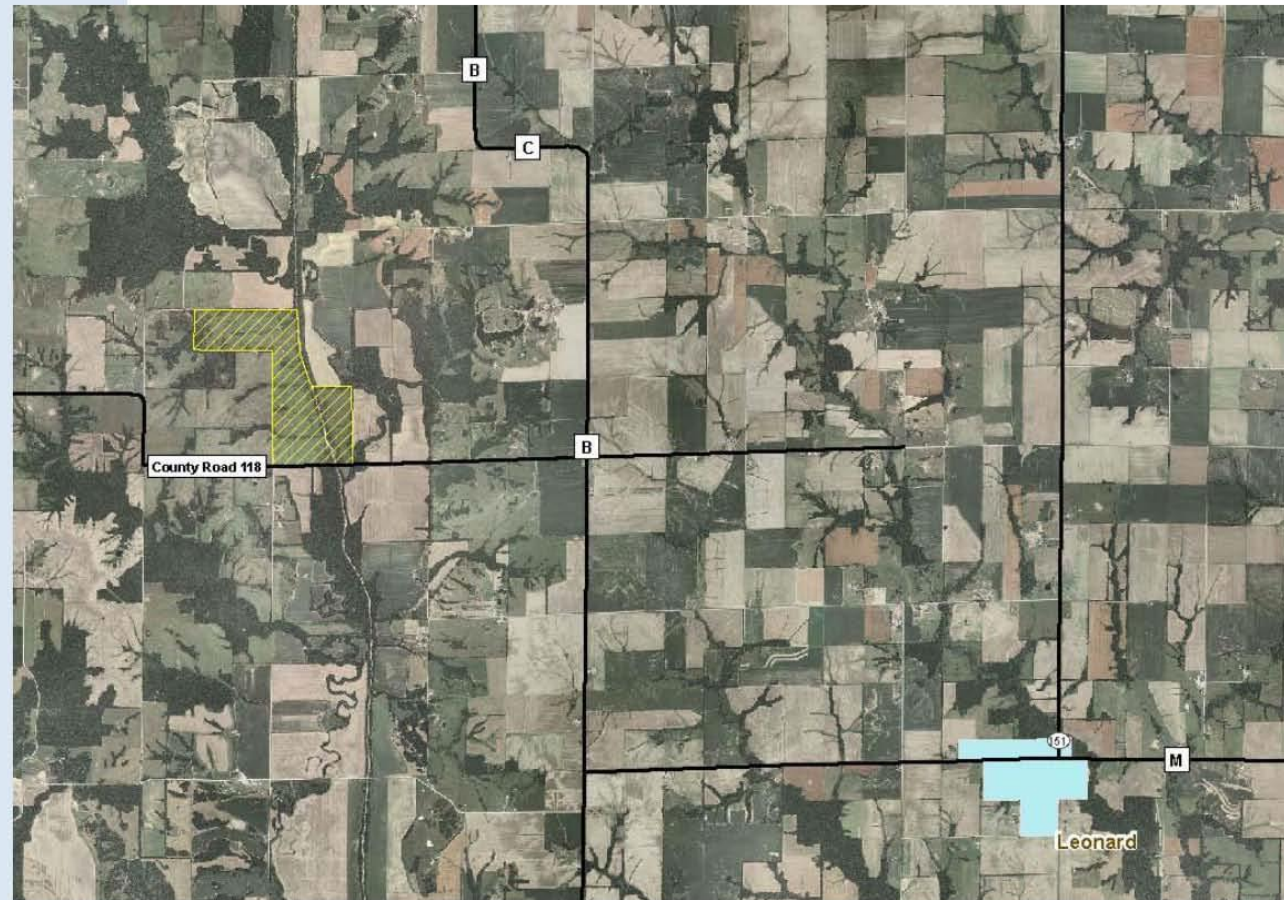
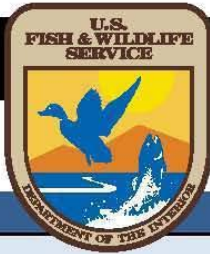


Figure 5: Cherry Box Unit  
300 Acres



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Great River National Wildlife Refuge

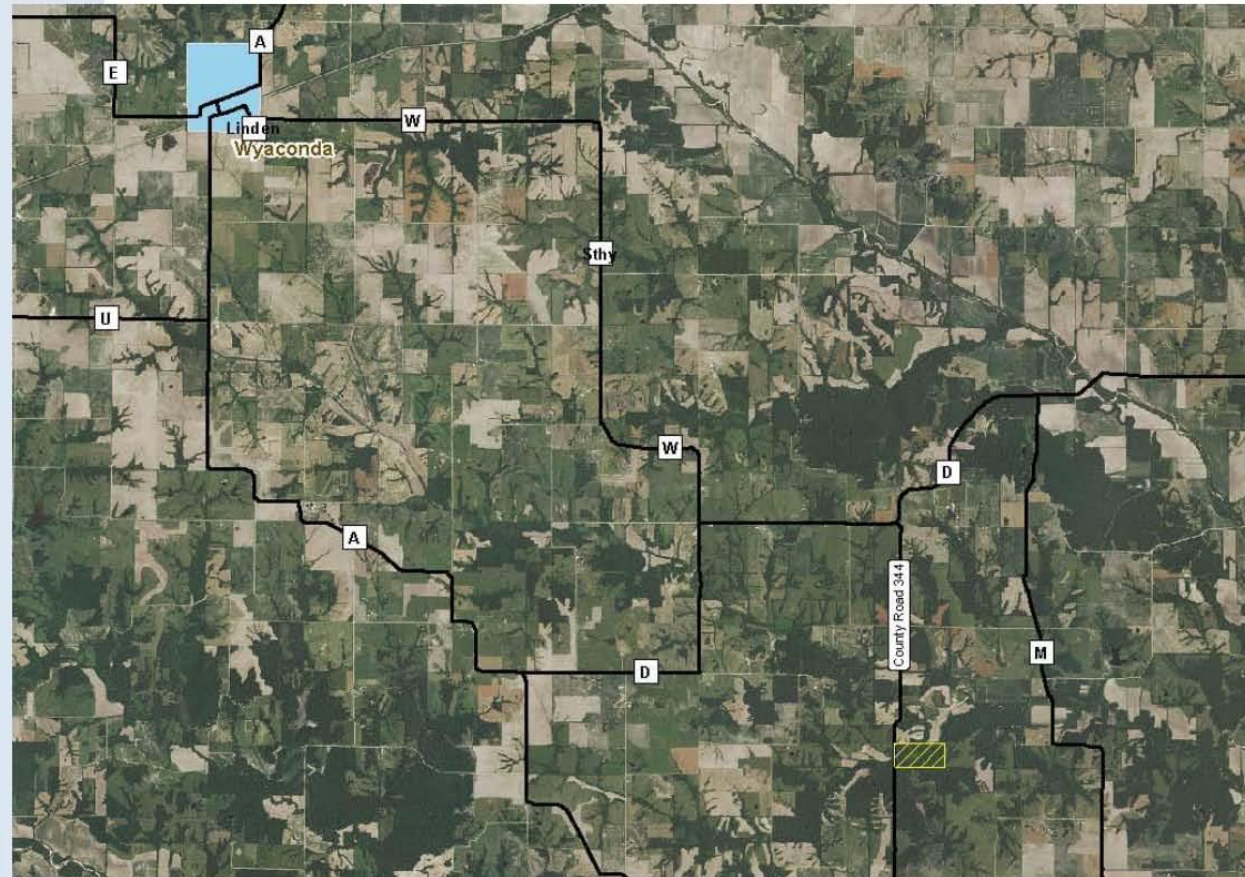
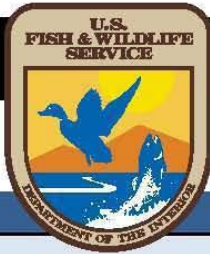


Figure 6: Hickory Creek Unit  
80 Acres





## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Great River National Wildlife Refuge

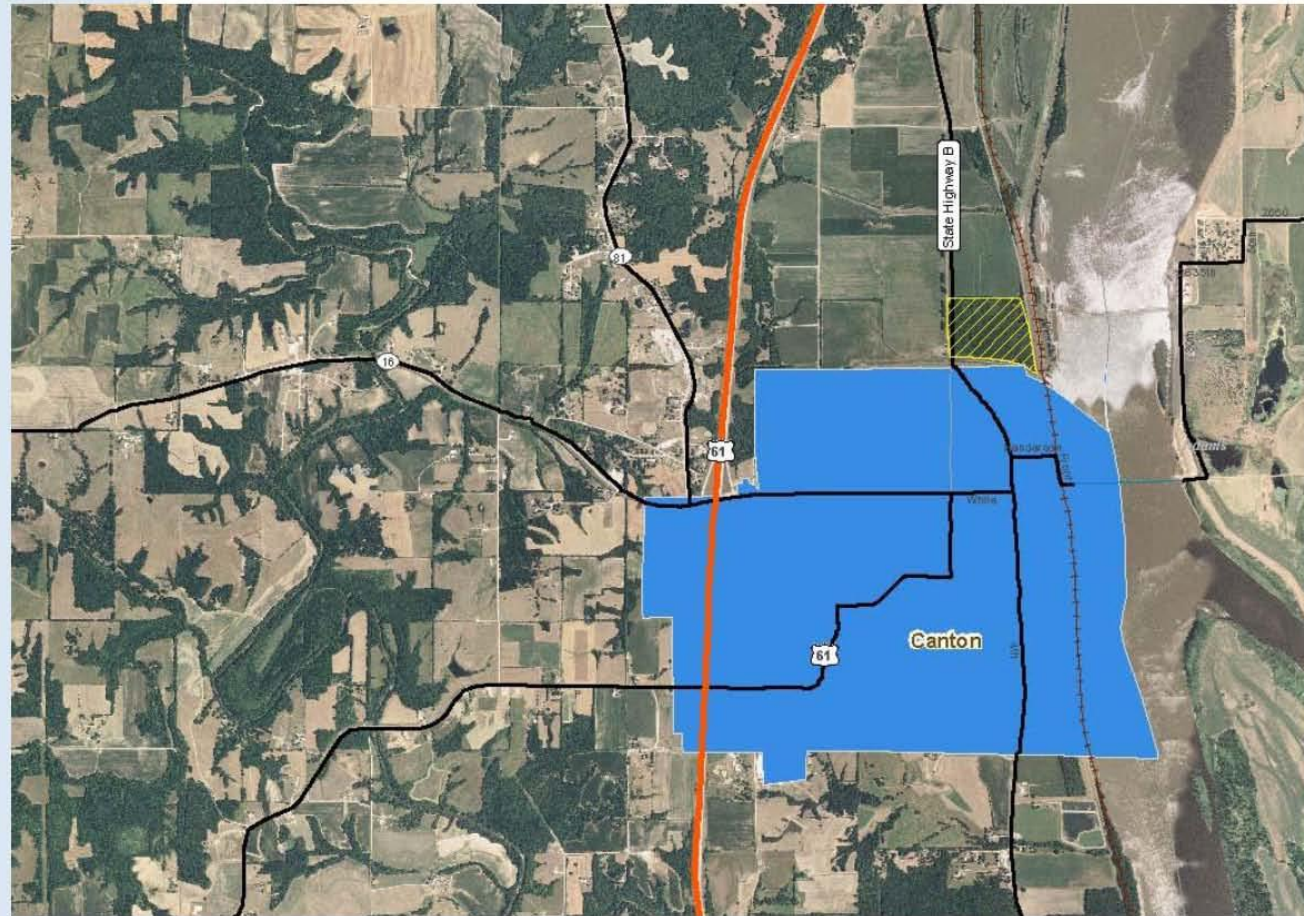


Figure 7: Canton Unit  
44 Acres